Mr. *HESKETH's*

SERMON

Preach'd at *Kingston*-Assizes,
March 30. 1699.

G.R. III

A

SERMON

Preach'd at the

ASSIZES

Held for the

County of Surrey,

AT

Kingſton upon *Thames*,

March 30. 1699.

By *HENRY HESKETH*, Rector of *Charlewood*, and Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majeſty.

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A

To the Right Honourable

Sir *JOHN HOLT*, Kt.

Lord Chief-Justice of *England*, and One of His Majesty's most Honourable Privy-Council.

My Lord,

IT is by Your Lordship's Command (for such any signification of Your Desire shall always be to me) that this Discourse is made thus Publick; and the Kindness that you have shewed to the Author, makes it Duty in him to lay it with all Humility and Thankfulness at your Feet.

I did not think that there was any thing in it, to recommend it to such a kind Acceptance, unless Honesty and Plain-dealing were in Reputation again.

But when I saw Your Lordship's Thoughts seconded by the Worthy Gentlemen upon the Bench, and Grand Jury too, I confess I was affected, not so much with the favour shew'd to my self (God knows)

as with the joyful hope, that the true Spirit and Temper of Religion breathed in thoſe Perſons, who by the Influence they have upon, as well as Intereſt in their Country, may happily propagate it to others below them.

May God Almighty verifie the Preſage, and inſpire them with Zeal in this Noble Deſign. May that Heavenly Dew, which now I begin to hope is fallen upon the top of Hermon, *refreſh not only the immediate Declenſions, but at laſt Water the very* Fields of Zion. *And may Your Lordſhip, and all thoſe Worthy Perſons, rejoice in thoſe Bleſſings which God hath promiſed to give there to all good Men now, and in thoſe greater Portions of Bliſs that he hath provided for ſuch hereafter. This is, and ſhall be the daily Prayer of,*

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's

Moſt humble and
obedient Servant

Henry Hesketh.

1 Tim. i. 9.

Knowing this, that the Law is not made for a Righteous Man, but for the Lawleſs and Diſobedient, for the Ungodly and for Sinners, for Unholy and Prophane, &c.

THE Connexion of theſe Words is not ſo very plain, but that we may pertinently enough ſtay to clear it; and the rather becauſe doing that, may let us eaſilier into the meaning of them.

The Apoſtle had in the precedent Verſes reflected with ſome ſmartneſs upon a company of pretended Apoſtles and falſe Teachers, that had crept into the Conventions of Chriſtians, who pretending to a more perfect underſtanding of the Law than other Men, boaſted themſelves to be the only true Teachers of it, and ſeeming to penetrate deeper into the more abſtruſe ſence thereof, they took occaſion to teach the belief of ſome ſtrange myſtical *Genealogies*, and to amuſe Men's Heads with needleſs though curious Speculations, and Queſtions of no uſe, either to Faith or Manners.

It

It is very probable, the Apoſtle meant that primitive Sect of the *Gnoſticks*, ſo called from their pretending to a deeper and more exact Knowledge of the Myſteries of Chriſtian Religion than others; and his ſpeaking of their buſying themſelves about *Genealogies*, &c. makes it very clear, that he meant that Peſtilent Sect, which [illegible] great noiſe with theſe; a Specimen of which [illegible] *Irenæus* gives us in his Notes upon this place.

Having reflected upon [illegible] high Law Preachers, with a deſign to [illegible] and others to beware of them, leſt what he [illegible] might be miſinterpreted; as if he meant [illegible] the Law, he tells us, *yet* [illegible] *Law* [illegible] *if it be uſed lawfully*, i. e. to that end and purpoſe for which it was made; which was not to imploy Men in Genealogies, and vain [illegible] but to [illegible] them to the doing of that [illegible] which it commanded, as well as to reſtrain them from the Evil [illegible]. And when Men uſe it themſelves, and teach others to uſe it to theſe Ends, they uſe it as they ſhould; and when they preach it up to this End, they do laudably and well.

But it was not ſo very proper and pertinent to make ſuch a noiſe [illegible] preaching the Law to Chriſtians, who if they anſwer'd their Character were good Men, for whom the Law was not intended, for we ought to know this, *that the Law was not made for a Righteous Man, but for the Lawleſs and Diſobedient, for the Ungodly and for Sinners, for Unholy and Profane*, &c.

In ſpeaking to which Words, I ſhall crave your Patience only while I do make two general things.

I. En-

I. Endeavour to give the true ſenſe and meaning of them.

II. And then endeavour to make that ſenſe as uſeful to us as poſſible, by drawing ſome ſuch Inferences from it as [illegible] this Meeting, and the end of [illegible]

[illegible] which it will be needful [illegible]

[illegible] on what reaſon it is here ſaid, *The Law is not made for a righteous Man.* [illegible] ſenſe, and upon what reaſon, it is ſaid [illegible] *the Lawleſs and Diſobedient, for the* [illegible] and eſpecially for [illegible] afterwards par[illegible]ance.

[illegible] be enough on this firſt ge[illegible] it ſo needful to waſte our [illegible] on of *a Righteous Man*, for [illegible] not to be made.

[illegible] plain [illegible] Scripture, if Men [illegible] and have [illegible] all kinds in per[illegible] of it. I ſuppoſe there are two [illegible] Righteous Man, as well as of Righteouſ[illegible] the one more reſtrained, and then it [illegible] Man, and the other more lax and large, and then it is the ſame as a Good Man, *i. e.* one that is careful to do his Duty in all the Inſtances of it, reſpecting God, his Brother, or himſelf, which

our Apoſtle expreſſeth by *living ſoberly, and righteouſly, and godly in this World*, Tit. 2. 12.

It is commonly taken in this ſenſe, and I believe almoſt always ſo, where it is [illegible] named, and where one of the other words [illegible] with it, [illegible] this place, and a hundred [illegible] and the word is very [illegible]. For as all Duty, of what [illegible] called Juſtice, and the variations [illegible] ances of the other [illegible] righteous, or [illegible] juſt to his Neighbour, [illegible]

Not alas that [illegible] up to the Rule [illegible] this Imperfection and Weak[illegible]ein to Men are [illegible] by [illegible] violence [illegible] to his Pow[illegible] in, and [illegible]e is cious Ter[illegible] and ſhall be [illegible] as ſuch.

But now [illegible] to our [illegible] and [illegible] be [illegible] a one, [illegible] Good M[illegible] remain in the [illegible] may he [illegible] the be[illegible] [illegible] to pray, Good Master, [illegible] to receive [illegible] God's Laws? or is he not [illegible]le with [illegible] to tranſgreſs the [illegible] favour [illegible] of Antinomianiſm [illegible] that [illegible] have [illegible] this looſe Age? that a Child of God is no[illegible] [illegible] out the drudgery of Duty, o[illegible]ged t[illegible] is no great matter whether he [illegible]ard the [illegible] of God or not. He is juſtified by Faith in Chriſt, and whether he obſerve the Law, or tranſgreſs it, is no great Matter,

ter, the one ſhall no more help on, than the other ſhall prejudice his Salvation.

But muſt we underſtand this Speech of our Apoſtle to any ſuch purpoſe, or in Patronage of it? God forbid! This were to abuſe the Law indeed, and perhaps in a worſe ſenſe than theſe Hereticks did.

So that you ſee it will be needful to give the true ſenſe of this Speech of our Apoſtle, and reſcue it from the Abuſes, which have been put upon it, and the Inferences that have been deduced from it.

To which purpoſe I ſhall give firſt negatively, that we are not to underſtand this Saying abſolutely, or think that it holds [illegible], as the Schools ſpeak; as if

A Good Man were not at all concerned in the Law, and had not right to claim the Benefit of it in any caſe: For it is both his protection from Evil, and [illegible] which he may warrantably apply to it for

So that in this ſenſe the reverſe to the Text is true, the Law is made for the Righteous, and not for the Unrighteous. It is made to protect the Innocent, and not the Guilty: to ſecure good Men from Wrong, and to [illegible] when they refuſe it.

It is [illegible] with Concern to think the contrary, as ſome of our Hereticks, and a preſent Spawn of them among us pretend to do, as if by a ſeeming over-ſtrictneſs in this and ſome other, both Doctrines and Practices, they would conceal or compenſate for their Looſeneſs and Blaſphemy in others.

There is an extremity, I must confess, in this, as there is usually in most Cases of this Nature, and the Apostle seems to tax it in the Christians at *Corinth*, that is, to go to Law for every [illegible] and to [illegible] Men presently for every [illegible] to take [illegible] Advantage in Law that [illegible] and [illegible] Simplicity may give [illegible] *overmuch*, as *Solomon* [illegible] many Cases may happen [illegible] good Man, or is [illegible] er, to be rigorous [illegible] nes the Law [illegible] much better to be [illegible] cuted. And [illegible] Command it, in that [illegible] to [illegible] were [illegible] up [illegible] Prosecute [illegible] make the [illegible]

But w[illegible] Ext[illegible] just and [illegible] Medium [illegible] Case, and [illegible] expecting the [illegible] pleading the [illegible] Innocent Person do [illegible] protected [illegible] Cases, and [illegible]

2. We must not [illegible] if a good Man were not under [illegible] or not in duty-bound to [illegible] the Laws of God, and of his Country [illegible] as much as any other Man.

There

There hath a wild Doctrine indeed been propagated in these looser Ages, that a good Man is above Law, and manumitted from it, is a Freeman in Christ, and must not be *the Servant of Men.* Dominion and Property is founded in Grace, and the Saints are to give Laws to others, and not to receive Laws from them.

What Mischiefs [illegible] done under the Umbrage of this Doctrine, and what barbarous things it hath been made the Pretence of, those that have either conversed [illegible] things in this Nation, or read [illegible] the Proceedings of the Anabaptists in Germany, [illegible] to tell you. And were it not [illegible] Jesuits are well known, and their [illegible] ng, not only Innocency but Merit of the most Christian things that are done for the Interest of their Church, [illegible] thought impossible, that [illegible] that wear the Profession of Christianity, should so [illegible] their good Religion, as to commit such things under [illegible] pretence.

[illegible] also is far from being warranted by any thing our Apostle means in this Saying, is evident. For,

1. The Divine Laws are the Rule of a good Man's Life and Actions, and the Gospel is so far from trashing [illegible] discharging good Men from them, that it ties the Obligation to them closer and more strongly: And [illegible] spoken so expresly, both by our Saviour, *Matt.* 5. 17. and our own Apostle too, *Rom.* 3. *ult.* that none can well mistake it.

2. And we find the same Apostle as expres too, as to a good Man's Obligation to the Laws of his King and Country; and as long as the *five first Verses*

ſes of the 13th Chapter to the Romans are uncancelled, there will be no avoiding of it, nor any pretence of Saintſhip, or Clergyſhip either (if you will give me leave to make a Word) that [illegible] or diſcern from it. For accord[illegible] to [illegible] doctrine [illegible] place, thoſe that [illegible] act [illegible] on thoſe Thoughts, [illegible] mſelves Damnation, with [illegible] Clergymen or [illegible]

3. No nor [illegible] as either to teach, or [illegible] doth not ſin, or offend [illegible] tranſgreſs his Law.

I confeſs, ſo far as [illegible] Righ[illegible] he is from tranſgreſſi[illegible] and [illegible] on to his [illegible] y wh[illegible] quires, [illegible] ſo far he [illegible] Man. [illegible] Imperfe[illegible] *righteous* [illegible] *ſinneth* [illegible] of the L[illegible] muſt [illegible] mpted [illegible] [illegible] oppo[illegible] [illegible] been [illegible] fore. For [illegible] ed, that [illegible] his People; [illegible] there is [illegible] ſo there is nothing con[illegible] le in [illegible] in Chriſt Jeſus; but thoſe [illegible] whi[illegible] hat are out of Chriſt, are fo[illegible] ins, l[illegible] Maligni-ty, and are no Sins in them that are in him.

There

There was once a Book printed in *London*, *Anno* 1656. and with the Approbation and Commendation of moſt of the leading Miniſters there (eſpecially of the Independent Party) in which there is this memorable Paſſage: "In caſe you be at any time, by reaſon of the weakneſs of your Faith, or ſtrength of your Temptations, prevailed with to tranſgreſs any of Chriſt's Commands, beware you do not thereupon take occaſion to call Chriſt's Love to you in queſtion, but believe firmly, that he loves you as much as he did before you tranſgreſſed, though for a certain Truth, as no Goodneſs in you, or done by you, did, or can move him to love you more; ſo no Evil in you, or done by you, can move him to love you the leſs."

This Book was called, *The Mirrour of Modern Divinity*, and it might truly be called *The Mirrour of Modern Divinity*, for in that Picture there is nothing of the Form or Beauty in it. Thoſe good Men, the Saints of Chriſt's Church, neither did nor do teach any ſuch Doctrines, but as they found, by daily Experience, that none (while here) were ſo perfect as not to tranſgreſs the Laws of Chriſt, ſo they were far enough from thinking that ſuch tranſgreſſions were not formal Sins even in the Beſt.

And therefore, as they taught with St. *John*, 1 *John* 1. 8. that the beſt Men muſt ſaid *they had no Sins*, *they deceived themſelves*, *and the Truth*, &c. ſo they taught that daily confeſſing of our Sins, daily Repentance for them, and daily Applications to the Mercies of God and Merits of Chriſt for the pardon

pardon of them, was necessary for the most Righteous while they liv'd in this World.

2. But how then are we to understand this Passage in our Text? What I shall be most distinctly do [illegible] are two Parts of the [illegible] derable in it, the [illegible] may to speak, *i.e.* the Thing commanded, and the Sanction, *i.e.* the [illegible] spect to it.

1. There [illegible] perhaps, it was [illegible] first was not given [illegible] Reason is, because [illegible] rection of [illegible] because he [illegible] Apostle [illegible] the Tab[illegible] not say [illegible] him the [illegible] ter another [illegible] Thus it [illegible] that liv'd before Moses [illegible] Law; nor needed any, because they found [illegible] the great Lines of Duty written [illegible] Minds. Now it is in its proportion [illegible] Men since, and what need they the [illegible] of a Law to teach them their Duty, [illegible] and it well enough, if they [illegible] attend [illegible] the Instruction of their own Minds and Consciences?

But

But I will not adventure to lay all the weight of this Saying only upon this Expoſition (though I confeſs it hath very good Authority to plead;) for I do not think this inward Light ſo very clear in Men, but that they may want a clearer Director and Guide in many Caſes; and I am ſure the beſt Men have gladly accepted and acknowledged the Benefit of the written Law and Revelation of God.

2. I would therefore rather think, that this Speech of our Apoſtle reſpects the Sanction of the Law; I mean the Penal part of it, *i. e.* which commands ſuch Duties, and forbids ſuch Sins, under the Penalty of Sufferings and Puniſhments, in caſe of neglecting the one, and committing the other. And this, I think, may be ſaid not to be made for a Righteous Man in theſe two reſpects.

1. That it is not the Impellent of his Duty, or not the great Argument that influenceth his Obedience: He ſerves his God, and doth his Duty willingly, and from a vital Principle within, and ſo needs not the Rod of the Law to whip him to it. For what need of a Law (ſaith St. *Chryſoſtom*), to force them to Duty, who do it willingly of their own Accord, by the Influences, as well as Aſſiſtance of God's Spirit and Grace? and I find St. *Auguſtin*, St. *Hierome*, and others, quoted to the ſame purpoſe.

And this ſeems to be favoured by what our Apoſtle ſpeaks ſo often of the Goſpel Spirit, in oppoſition to the legal, calling one *the Spirit of Love*, as 2 *Tim.* 1. 7. and the other *of Bondage*, as *Rom.* 8. 15. one therefore is called the Spirit of a Child, which doth his Duty out of filial Reſpect and Love; the

other of a Slave, who doth what he doth only for Fear.

I am not of some ranting Enthusiasts Opinion, that it is altogether below a Good Man, to have either any regard to Reward or Punishment; I think Hope and Fear two very useful Passions in Man while he is in this State, and that it is not unbecoming Good Men to be influenced in some Measure by them. Though I do believe that the more a Man improves in the Divine Life, the more he goes from under their Government, and the less he needs them; and in time arrives to that settled State, and that sweet Relish of God and Goodness, as to be able with the good Man of old, to say, *Amor meus pondus meum.* Love is the great Weight that sets my Mind in Motion, and the prevailing Argument in all my Duty and Services to my God.

2. The Penal part of the Law is not made for a *Righteous Man*, because he is not obnoxious to it, nor within the reach of it. The Penalty of the Law is to be inflicted upon those only that transgress the Law, which a Righteous Man, so far as he is righteous, doth not; and for what he doth amiss, God will accept his Repentance, as a deletory of his Guilt, for the sake of what his Saviour hath done and suffered for him. Being made free from Sin, he is freed from the Curse due to Sin, and so in this Sense (as well as some others) *is not under the Law, but under Grace.*

This shall suffice for the Explanation of this Negative part of the Text, *The Law was not made for a Righteous Man.*

2. The

2. The next is the Positive, but *for the Lawless and Disobedient, i. e.* for Sinners in general, and for those notorious Sinners in particular, which are afterwards mentioned, as a just Reflection upon those impure *Gnosticks*, who taking upon them to be the most refin'd Expounders of the Law, were in the mean time the most gross and lewd Transgressors of it.

To our understanding of this there will need the less to be said, after what hath been offer'd upon the former. To proceed therefore here in the same Method we did before.

1. I observe first, Negatively, The Law was not made for the Lawless and Disobedient, *&c.* either first, to indulge them in their Wickedness; or, 2dly, protect them in doing amiss; or, 3dly, secure them from Punishment when they have done so. We are by no means to think the Apostle means any such things; and it were a gross misunderstanding the Reason and Design of Law to think so.

The same Apostle tells us, That Magistrates are appointed *for the Punishment of Evil-doers*; and the Law is the Instrument by which they punish them: And it were as gross a perverting the End of Laws, to slacken them in favour of an ill Man, as it would be to stretch and center them to the Prejudice and Punishment of the Innocent and Good.

2. The meaning then positively must be in some such Particulars as these that follow:

Either first, as to the directing part of the Law, to shew wicked Men their Duty, and to mark out their Sins; and perhaps this may be asserted not without

good Reaſon. For though the great Lines of Duty, and the difference between Good and Evil, be drawn pretty clear upon the Minds of all Men, and a Senſe thereof wrought into the very Contexture of Human Nature, ſo that there is no pulling it out, without quite unravelling the whole.

Yet it may reaſonably be preſumed, that this Senſe is much weakned and diſtorted, and this Innate Light greatly obſcured in moſt Wicked Men: And I would fain hope, that a great part of the Wickedneſs committed in the World is done out of Ignorance, as much, or more, than Wilfulneſs. I would not willingly think ſo ill of Human Nature, or allow it to be degenerated to ſuch monſtrous degrees, as that all Men that ſin, do ſo of *malicious Wickedneſs*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks. Moſt Wicked Men, I hope, do not know when they do amiſs, at leaſt, do not actually conſider that they do ſo.

So that upon both Reaſons, the Law may be ſaid to be wiſely made for a Wicked Man, to ſupply the Light of his own Mind, which he hath obſcured, and to force him to advert to that *Δαιμόνιον ἔνδοθεν πνεῦμα*, that kind Monitor in his own Breaſt, which he by his wicked Arts hath endeavoured to ſilence and ſtop the Mouth of.

However this be, it may to be ſure, be ſafely aſſerted, that the Law was *made for a Wicked Man*, upon theſe two Reaſons that follow.

2. That it might reſtrain and curb the Evil Propenſions of Men, and keep them in from breaking out into thoſe Wickedneſſes that they are ſo very prone unto.

This

This is certainly the chief Design and Aim of Laws, not only by their Light to mark out all those Instances of Vice, which are so destructive to Men themselves, and especially to the Community of which they are Members (just as Buoys and Seamarks are set to give notice to Marriners of Rocks and Shelves, that they may take care in time to avoid them;) but also by their Sanctions and Threatnings of Punishment, to fright Men from them.

For as well as Men love Sin, they love not the Suffering for it; and as violent and impetuous as their Inclinations are to the one, yet they may be checked and awed by the other.

Fear and Love are two most powerful Passions in Human Nature; and until all Wicked Men have quite put off these, or surmounted the force of them, the Sanctions of Law will have some effect upon them, because they cannot allow themselves to transgress, and incur those Penalties, till they have quite lost all love and respect to themselves, or quite extinguished all fear of Suffering. And whatever we may see to induce us to believe that hardened Sinners have done both these, yet I am apt to believe, that they are far from them. They do in truth but put a bold Face upon a bad Matter. They sin, not that they care not for Suffering, but that they hope they may escape it. They feel some secret Checks, and uneasie Bodings of Danger in their own Minds and Consciences; but they study Arts to weaken the Power of the one, and disargue the Presages of the other; and then they venture upon Sin with less regret or controul.

But

But certainly while the ſenſe and fear of Suffering is freſh upon their Minds, ſelf-love and fear will have ſome hold upon them; and then the threatnings of the Law will have ſome hold of them too, ſo as in ſome meaſure to be a curb and reſtraint upon them.

So that Laws are wiſely and with great reaſon made to this purpoſe; and while humane Nature remains in any meaſure like it ſelf, they will not fail of ſome effect upon Men. And it is owing chiefly to theſe, and God's immediate Interpoſition with them, that the World is not quite overrun with Wickedneſs and Confuſion long before this time.

3. But there is a third Reaſon upon which the Law may be ſaid to be made for a Wicked Man; and no doubt but the Apoſtle had reſpect to it, and that is, it is made for his Correction and Puniſhment.

This is alſo one great end of the Law, though I think but collateral and conſequential; for as I think it would be a reflection upon Law, to ſay, that it directly intends Puniſhment and Suffering; ſo I think it as great a Miſtake to ſay, that a Man obeys the Law, by ſuffering the Penalty threatned by it, as well as by doing the Duty commanded in it. Upon which Reaſon I profeſs, that to me there are ſome Difficulties in the Doctrine of *Active* and *Paſſive* Obedience, as they are commonly received, which I can never get over, till I can be perſwaded to believe, that a Man is as obedient a Subject in ſuffering for Treaſon, as in yielding faithful Allegiance to his Prince.

But I return to what I was ſaying, that though Laws are made to reſtrain Men from ſinning, yet they are made too to punish them for ſinning; and without this all their threatnings of Puniſhment were

to

to little purpoſe; it would avail but little, as to the end of Law, to threaten Suffering and Puniſhment to Offenders, if it were not intended to execute what is threatned; and (as perhaps will be ſaid by and by) if ſometimes when there is occaſion, that which was threatned be not actually executed.

But I will not dwell longer upon this Doctrinal part of my Diſcourſe, but proceed immediately to the ſecond.

II. General, which is to make it as uſeful as I can, by drawing ſome Inferences from it, which will ſhew this Diſcourſe not to be wholly impertinent, or irrelative to the Reaſon of this Convention.

1. And firſt I obſerve from what hath been ſaid, what a happineſs it is to the World in general, and to Nations in particular, to be under Government and Laws.

There is abundance of Wickedneſs in the World (God knows,) but if it were not for Laws, there would certainly be a great deal more. And we that ſee how hardly Men are reſtrained from Sin, by all the Arts of Government, and utmoſt Severities of Laws, may eaſily (all without the Spirit of Prophecy) how impetuous and violent they would be, were they not under them at all. All the Penalties and Threatnings of Puniſhment cannot over-awe Men ſo, but that they will venture upon Wickedneſs; what would they do then, if they were under no apprehenſion or fear of them?

It

It hath been commonly ſaid, that without Government and Laws, the Societies of Men would be but ſo many wild *Arabian* Herds; and the truth is, they would be very little better. The ſtate of War which the great Factor for Anarchy, in his Relation, makes to be the natural ſtate [illegible] be ſo ſtill; where Men would be [illegible] ing and fighting with one another, [illegible] would be the only Right; and where [illegible] would ſtill be preying upon the Weak, [illegible] there could be no ſuch thing as Rights and Properties, nor any Man ſure to enjoy any thing that he had, any longer than another ſhould please not to take it from him. A Man can hardly think, but no Man can fully deſcribe the Misery and Confuſion that would be among Men, the Fears and Jealouſies that would poſſeſs and diſturb them in ſuch a ſtate, without the hope or poſſibility of redreſs.

I have often thought, that it was not without ſome ſhow of Reaſon at leaſt, that [illegible] in the Heathen World of old, that had [illegible] inſtruments for ſecuring States and Nations under Government and Laws, were honour'd after their Deaths with Divine Worſhip, after thinking that the good they did to their reſpective States and Nations was ſo immenſely great, that no mortal Honours were big enough to be returned for them. And upon the ſame reaſon the [illegible] eaſily perſuade the People to believe, that [illegible] and their Laws from the Gods.

And the truth is, the benefit beſpake a God, and was worthy of a God, and no meaner a return was due for it; and all the fault was, that it was extravagantly

gantly miſplaced upon thoſe who were but only Inſtruments in theſe Bleſſings, under that great and good God, who hath fitted Men for Government, and inſpired them with Knowledge and Skill to make Laws, that were both ſo uſeful to ſupport Government, and ſo beneficial to thoſe that were under it.

To him therefore be the praiſe of theſe Bleſſings always return'd. Let thoſe great Men, that have been, or are Inſtruments under him, in conferring theſe Bleſſings, have all Honour and Reſpect fit to be paid to Mortal Beings. But let God be adored and praiſed both in them and for them.

And that I may bring this Inference ſomething cloſer to our ſelves, let me obſerve, that if there be a Nation at this Day, under Heaven, that hath cauſe to bleſs Almighty God for this Happineſs, we in this Kingdom and Nation have more. Other Nations are under Government, and doubtleſs have many wiſe and excellent Laws; but he that hath obſerved the ſtate of thoſe Governments, and thoſe that live under them, and then reflects upon our own, may very well borrow the Verſe of the Poet a little changed, *Felices nimium bona ſi ſua nôrint.*— O happy *England*, if it would but think it ſelf to be ſo; and be ready to think that there was nothing wanting to make this the happieſt Government in the World, ſo much as Mens conſidering and being ſatisfied, that ſo it is.

A Government ſettled in that happy poiſe, that Subjects are as much ſecured from the power of the Prince, as the Prince is ſo from the Inſults of the People, under no Laws but what themſelves have an Intereſt in making, not liable to any Exactions to which themſelves do not conſent.

May God Almighty always continue it, and make

us duly thankful for it. And may all Factious and Seditious Persons, that would disturb, or overturn it, be mark'd for common Plagues, and avoided as such. May they feel the Penalties of those Laws which themselves despise, and of sharper too if they can be made. May they by a bleeding Experience find, that our Laws which are so much for the protection and benefit of good Men, were in truth made for such *lawless and disobedient* Wretches as themselves.

There are many excellent deductions that might be made from this Argument, but I must not think to have time allowed me for them. Therefore I shall only crave patience while I remark only one more. And that's this,

2. If the Laws be made for *disobedient and wicked* Men, then I hope it will be thought fit to execute them against such.

Here is a black List of some notorious Crimes following in the Text, and some so unnatural that a Man might think them hardly competent to Men. But there are several others besides them, that it may be deserve as severe an Animadversion of the Laws, and I would to God I could not say among our selves at this day.

It is a very melancholick Reflection to observe how strangely Profaneness is come to abound of late in this Nation, and to what a monstrous height it is grown, so as almost to scorn all Law, and bear down all restraint of it.

It is something strange, that in a sober Nation (as this hath been accounted) a Nation professing Godliness and Christian Religion, and this Religion reformed from many gross Errors, &c. that stick to it yet in many other Nations, I say it is something strange that in such a Nation, and where there are so many excellent Laws against it too, Wickedness should

over-

overflow, and cauſe ſuch a dreadful Inundation.

It were perhaps worthy of an Inquiry what the Cauſes of this ſhould be. And beſides the common ones that always operated to this purpoſe, and always will, I believe theſe two will be found to be the moſt influential.

One is that wretched Artifice of our Enemies of the *Roman* Communion, and the Method that that bleſſed Sect of Jeſuits have taken to bring us o'er to their Religion by; which was by unhinging Mens natural ſenſe of Religion, and arguing them into Atheiſm, or a downright Scepticiſm and queſtioning the Obligations and Reaſons of all Religion; yea, a ſtudied propagating Senſuality and Looſneſs of Life and Manners, as well as of Belief.

It may well ſeem ſtrange, that Atheiſm ſhould be thought a likely way to bring Men to Religion, or Looſneſs in Life a good Method to make them good Catholicks. If we conſider things only ſuperficially, we may very well queſtion the Policy of this.

But alas we are deceiv'd if we do ſo. Thoſe cunning Sophiſters know what they do, and are as ſubtil as the old Serpent in it; bring Men to an Atheiſtical Temper once, and then all ways of Religion are alike to them. Debauch their Manners, and then if there muſt be any Religion, let it be the eaſieſt, that which will allow the greateſt latitude to Vice, and give hopes of Pardon upon the cheapeſt terms. And let the *R. Religion* alone for that.

We have liv'd to ſee the effect of this Policy in the few Proſelites that they gain'd, when they played their Game openly among us; when it was eaſie to ſee what was the moſt prevailing Argument in moſt of their Converſions.

Another Cauſe doubtleſs, hath been from our own unhappy Differences and Conteſts about Religion a-

among our selves. In the starting and fomenting of which, though it be notoriously known that they have had a great hand, yet we are so imprudent and unhappy, as to perfue their Methods against our selves.

The effect of these is too notorious to need instancing, it being natural for Men that see so many Religions to question all, or resolve to be of none, till all be agreed. Especially when they think they are indulg'd, or at least can pervert the meaning of an Indulgence to that purpose; for let it be marked as well as can be, it will be found, that as long as Men are indulg'd to be of what Religion they will, there will be a great many that will be of none at all. It is seen to be thus among us, and is plain matter of Fact. Men are permitted upon some Conditions to go to what places of Worship they think best, but abundance under that umbrage go to none at all; which though it be quite beside the intention of the Law, yet it seems little notice is as yet taken of it.

Now when Religion is at so low an ebb among us, it is no wonder if all manner of Profaneness and Wickedness run high, and so high (as if not timely check'd) to be very likely in a little time to overflow all.

But therefore sure there is more need to give check to it, and stem this Torrent by the strength of Laws. Which were they as vigorously executed, as they are wisely made, would go near to take down the Crests, and Consciences of wicked Men, and cool their courage in Sin. Men may Hector, and make a noise, but Law edg'd and back'd with just Execution, would be too hard for them, and whatever Confederacies or Complications in Wickedness there might be, the Sword of Justice would as easily dissolve them, as that in the hand of *Alexander* did the *Gordian* Knot.

And

And thus far I dare say we are all agreed, but here comes in the great Question, how shall we get these Laws executed? and on whom doth that Obligation to execute them lye?

The Supream Authority and Power hath discharg'd it self, and gone as far in this as it can; both by making us good Laws, and awakening them too by repeated Proclamations, and Remembrances in Parliament; so that He that, under God, hath been so Instrumental in saving us from one Evil, hath shew'd himself willing and desirous too that we might be secured from worse.

But alas what can a poor Prince do more? He may recommend Virtue by his own Example; and He may discourage Prosaneness by his Frowns; but alas few live under the Influence of the one, or within the reach of the other.

He may impart of his Power to others under him, and commission them as his Delegates to do Justice; but what if these be remiss, or neglect to do it? It is said that Kings have long Ears and Hands too; and it is true, because their Authority reacheth far, and can punish in the most most distant Places. But then it is as true, that they but see and hear with other Mens Eyes and Ears, and need them to give them Information of Misdoods, as well as their Hands for the Execution of Law against them: And if those other Men fail in either of these, who, I pray, is to be blamed?

It is very well, and a Happiness to the whole Nation, that at some stated times the Laws are awakened by solemn Executions. But alas, what doth this signifie whilst they lie dormant all the Year besides? What doth the Punishment or Death of a few forlorn Thieves, desperate Robbers or some few bloody Murtherers signifie, as to giving Check to the Wickedness of a Nation?

tion? There are other Sins perhaps, both as heinous in their Nature, and pernicious in their Effects as those, either not taken notice of, or not punished; as Lewdneſs, Whoredom, Curſing, Swearing, Fraud, and Knavery, Drunkenneſs, and all manner of Debauchery, &c. that brave even Authority, and laugh at Law.

My Lords the King's Juſtices can but puniſh what is brought before them; not be thought to know in a ſtrange Country what is done amiſs, and worthy of Puniſhment, unleſs it de preſented to them; and what a little of the Wickedneſs done among us that is, who knows not?

It muſt be you, Gentlemen, that are the Guardians of Law, and the Guarrantees of Peace in your Country, that muſt lend your Hand to this Work, if ever it be done. There cannot many things be done amiſs (at leaſt in many places) but they will come to your Cognizance, eſpecially if you would pleaſe to be ſtrict in taking account of thoſe Officers that are under you, and let them ſee that you are really in earneſt in your Charges to them.

I hope I need not uſe Arguments to perſuade you to ſo good a Work; it commends it ſelf ſufficiently to all ſober conſidering Men: It is a Work that would endear you to your God, making you (in a Senſe) Saviours of your Country, and by the Mercies of God, ſave your own Souls in the great Day of the Lord Jeſus.

If therefore you love and honour your God, reſcue his Glory and great Name from the bold Profanations of Wicked Men. If you love and pity your Sin-ſick Country, adminiſter this Phyſick; without which her Diſeaſe will ſoon come to a woful Criſis. And if you love your ſelves, diſcharge worthily this high Truſt, which your God and your Prince hath honoured you with,

with, that you may give up your Account with Joy at that great Day.

The Laws of our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospel are (I hope) faithfully made known, and the Terrors of the Lord urged upon Men, by those upon whom that Duty is incumbent: And if there be any that are either false to their Duty in this, or render it ineffectual by their own looseness, I thank God, I have no milder a Request to make for them, than that of our Apostle against these false Teachers related to in the Text, Οφελον και απωσωνται. For as I do really believe a vicious Clergyman to be one of the worst of Men in himself, so I look upon him as the most infectious and pernicious in his Example. But I hope there is no need of this Reflection, but that we *shall approve our selves the Servants of Christ, and your Servants for Jesus sake.*

But alas, suppose these were never so faithful in their Duty, *who will believe their Report*, or be concerned at what they denounce against Sinners? Men live *by Sense, and not by Faith*; and things that are so distant make little impression upon them. They must be present and sensible Punishments that must have effect upon an unbelieving and profane Generation of Men.

While Religion stood only by its own strength, and the Church had only spiritual Weapons to war with, those Weapons were not *carnal, but mighty through God* as our Apostle, 2 *Cor.* 10. 4. For God was pleased to accompany those spiritual Censures with present Punishments, and to be delivered to Satan was for the destruction of the Flesh without a Figure.

But when Scepters bowed to the Cross of Christ, and Kings became *Nursing Fathers* to his Church, then God expected that the Temporal Sword should do that upon obstinate Offenders, which he had been pleased

to

to do by the Ministry of Angels, in consequence of the Spiritual: and so he expects it should do still, and therefore it is hoped those that bear the Sword, *will not bear it in vain.*

It will require some measure of Courage, and the Spirit of a sound Mind to do it, I confess: But what if it do? the Work will support it self, and yield you that inward satisfaction, and that comfort, which will bear you out against all the Reproaches and hard Words that can be cast upon you by an evil Generation.

And would such worthy Persons but suffer themselves to be effectually perswaded to one thing, whatever difficulties there might be in this Work, with God's Grace it might happily be effected. The thing I mean is this, Care to free themselves from those Vices, which they should punish in others; else it is to be feared they will never do it, or never with Courage and Success. We say, when a Clergyman *takes heed to himself* as well as *to his Doctrine*, he speaks like his great Master, *with Authority and Power*; and when a Gentleman doth one, he doth the other too. Evil Men will reverence and dread such a one, but little regard all the Threats or Menaces of one as vicious themselves.

Here our so much wanted Reformation must begin, and when it doth so, then it will go on: Then may we begin to hope well, when we see *living Sermons, and moving Laws*; when the Lives of those in Authority as much reprove and shame, as their Power doth fright, and punish *the Lawless and Disobedient*, and when they let them see, and feel too, that the [illegible], and not against a Righteous Man.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, Three Persons and One God, be ascribed Dominion, Power and Glory, for evermore. Amen.

FINIS.